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AUTHOR Merrifield, Juliet; Bingman, Mary Beth; Hemphill, David; deMarrais, Kathleen P. Bennett

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ABSTRACT

This book develops an understanding of literacy and illiteracy through the life stories of 12 adults from diverse backgrounds living in the United States, 6 in Appalachia and 6 in California. Part 1 provides a summary of three areas of research offering insights and descriptive data about literacy: ethnographic studies of everyday literacy, studies on workplace uses of literacy, and research on problem solving in everyday activities. It describes the study on which the findings that comprise the remainder of the book are based. Part 2 contains the six profiles from the Appalachian region, with an introduction to the region and people. Part 3 summarizes the role of literacy and technology in their everyday life, their expectations and beliefs about literacy and technology, and how they view the demands placed on them by their social and personal contexts. It outlines barriers and incentives they identify to furthering their own literacy skills and examines how literacy affects their social relationships. Part 4 contains the six profiles from the California Bay Area, with an introduction to the region and people. Part 5 summarizes everyday uses of literacy, everyday technology use, and literacy demands and economic realities. It outlines the barriers and incentives to learning and addresses use of literacy in social and community relationships. Part 6 synthesizes findings relating to literacy, technology, and learning across all profiles. (Contains 48 references and an index.) (YLB)

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